STREET SPIRIT

Volume 18, No. 2 February 2012 $1.00

A publication of the American Friends Service Committee

JUSTICE NEWS & HOMELESS BLUES IN THE BAY AREA

Serial Killer Stalked Homeless Men in Orange County

The authorities place very little value on the lives of homeless people. Orange County offered the same paltry amount of reward money for the conviction of a serial killer of four homeless men as pet owners in the same affluent area offer for finding a lost dog or cat.

by Lynda Carson

At nearly the same moment as people in Oakland, San Francisco and 150 other cities across the country held Homeless Memorials this past December to remember homeless persons who died on the streets, a series of brutal murders of homeless men in Orange County delivered a shocking warning about the hazards of living on the streets.

The murders in late December and January caused widespread fear in the homeless community in Anaheim, Calif.

Finally, on Jan. 13, 2012, Orange County police arrested an alleged serial killer of homeless men. Itzcoatl Ocampo, a 23-year-old Iraq war veteran, was booked in the Anaheim jail as a suspect in the stabbing murders of four homeless people that began on Dec. 20, 2011.

The timing of the murders was deeply unsettling to many homeless advocates, since people had gathered in 150 cities all across the nation to mourn the premature deaths of homeless people on the streets.

Most of these memorials took place on Dec. 21, 2011 — the day after the first murder of a homeless man occurred.

During the very same time period in late December when clergy and homeless advocates gathered at these memorials to reflect on the many tragic causes of death of homeless people, Ocampo went on a murderous rampage, and left a bloody trail of homeless victims on the affluent streets of Orange County.

Itzcoatl Ocampo is being held without bail in Orange County Jail, after being caught and charged in the stabbing death of an elderly homeless man named John Berry, age 64, a Vietnam veteran. Berry was stabbed repeatedly by the 23-year-old ex-Marine, and died of fatal wounds late that Friday night, Jan. 13, in the parking lot of a Carl's Jr. restaurant in Anaheim, Calif.

People who knew John Berry told the press that he was "a spiritual man" who was so well liked by his neighbors that they created a large memorial for him at the corner of La Palma Avenue and Imperial Highway, where he was murdered.

See **Serial Killer Stalks Homeless** *page 6*

In Orange County, the homeless commuity was terrifed by a serial killer who stalked and murdered homeless people. Photo courtesy of National Coalition for the Homeless

Food Project Faces New Challenges in Overcoming Homelessness in Berkeley

"Every night now the shelters are full — zero vacancies. Emergency beds are full. We often put out cots, and then they get full." — Terrie Light, BFHP executive director

by Lydia Gans

The Berkeley Food and Housing Project (BFHP), one of the East Bay's major homeless programs, was founded in 1970, and does exactly what the name implies by providing food and housing for people in need.

The food part is relatively simple. BFHP workers provide sit-down meals or take-outs several days a week at two Berkeley locations. Their well-known Quarter Meal is provided free to all comers at Trinity United Methodist Church on 2362 Bancroft Way in Berkeley. Free lunches are offered to homeless women and children at their Women's Shelter, located at 2140 Dwight Way.

The housing part is complicated and getting more so every day. It started way back in the mid-1980s with an overnight shelter where homeless people were admitted in by a specified time in the evening, and had to leave the shelter by 8:00 in the morning. A person could be sure of a bed up to some maximum number of days, usually 30 days.

At that time, when the relatively new societal problem of long-term homelessness was first being recognized, it was assumed that whatever problems caused homelessness could be solved in time to get them into permanent housing. Advice, housing referrals, and help, in the form of case management, was available.

The expectation back then was that if shelter residents wanted housing and they really hustled, they should be able to find something before their shelter stay was up, with help from BFHP staff. But with the economic crisis creating ever greater numbers of homeless people, and overwhelming the shelter system in the East Bay, things began to change.

According to BFHP Executive Director Terrie Light, service providers in Berkeley began to notice a steady increase in the number of people coming for food, beginning in 2007. "Some weeks were pretty alarming," she said. Meanwhile, Light added, "Some of our donations were shrinking and we saw people coming into the agency that were first-time homeless."

This increase in the need for services "is an indicator that people are on the edge." Being compelled to choose between paying the rent and buying food is causing more and more people to fall into homelessness.

"Every night now the shelters are full," Light said. "Zero vacancies. Emergency

See **Berkeley Food and Housing** *page 7*

"Say Not What You Did For Your Country…" Art by San Francisco Print Collective

Studies show California has 20 percent of the nation's homeless veterans. In response, Berkeley Food and Housing Project launched a new program for military veterans.

Liberated Ads Confront the Foreclosure Crisis

In San Francisco, the California Department of Corrections (CDC) has unveiled a new campaign of bus shelter ads to confront America's home foreclosure crisis.

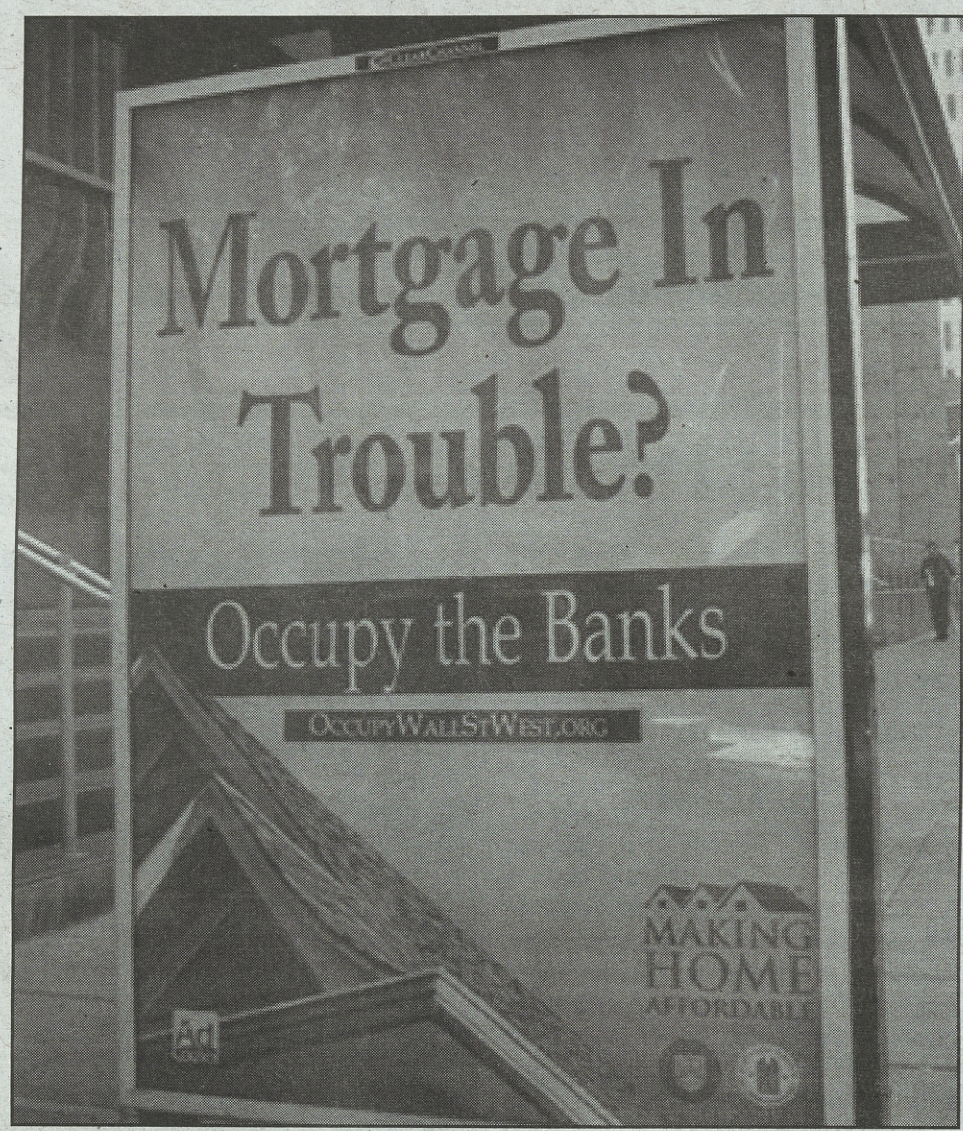
During the week of January 16, the CDC successfully apprehended, rehabilitated and discharged more than one dozen bus shelter advertisements throughout San Francisco, including one at the intersection of California and Davis Street, one block from the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

The CDC's red, white and blue advertisements declare: "MORTGAGE IN TROUBLE? OCCUPY THE BANKS" along with listing the website, www.OccupyWallStWest.org. Produced with the assistance of the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the corrected advertisements feature the rooftop of an American home set against clear blue skies with the phrase: "Making Home Affordable."

The corrected ads were released just prior to January 20, in anticipation of a day-long, nonviolent shut down of San Francisco's Financial District by Occupy SF. January 20 also marks the one-year anniversary of the controversial Citizens United decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which granted First Amendment protection to corporate political expenditures.

Occupy protesters are demanding a halt to predatory foreclosures and evictions by banks and the end of "corporate personhood." The demonstrators took their demands directly to the offices of banks and corporations in San Francisco to stop business as usual on January 20.

The rehabilitated advertisements are currently at liberty and seem to have successfully readjusted to public life.



This doctored ad shows how to resolve the foreclosure crisis: *Occupy the Banks*.

However, these ads will remain under surveillance by department staff to prevent recidivism and any potential lapse into prior criminal behavior.

Founded in 1994, the California Department of Corrections is a private correctional facility that protects the public through the secure management, discipline, and rehabilitation of California's advertising. The department was initiated by individuals who felt that public correctional facilities were insufficiently managing the state's most criminal elements and that effective care and treatment would improve under the supervision of a private institution.

For more information on the operations and programs of the CDC, contact the California Department of Corrections Office of Communications at cdc@revolutionist.com.

America Pillories

by Sue Ellen Pector

Poverty reaches
its wintry grip
beneath blankets.

America's homeless shelters
lack justice and safety.

On city sidewalks and in parks
destitute people are
rousted and reproached.

Only the pillory is missing.

America exposes
the vulnerable
to public abuse.

Do Unto Others

by George Wynn

Some people
stay the same
no matter how
much they pray

Catholics with
suspicious eyes
walk out of St. Patrick's
down Mission Street
giving homeless people
looks of disdain

Some po' folks get angry
some cover their eyes
to hide their pain.

Federal Voucher Reform Bill Will Harm Poorest Tenants

Commentary by Lynda Carson

As so-called charities and nonprofit affordable housing developers are grabbing more and more funds from the nation's affordable housing programs to pay their extremely high salaries, there is less money to go around for the needs of the poor, and to subsidize low-income renters.

As a direct result, on behalf of the affordable housing industry that wants to keep these high salaries in place, the federal government is about to remove the cap that limits the amount of rent that can be charged to the poorest of the poor.

Yet, there are no caps on how much money the executives in the so-called affordable housing industry can grab for their often excessively high salaries and wage compensation.

A revised draft of the proposed voucher reform bill was released by Republican staff of the House Financial Services Committee on Jan, 13, 2012. In essence, the voucher reform bill would end an existing cap on the amount of monthly rent that poor residents can be forced to pay. If the proposed new measure is passed into law, it would negatively affect low-income residents throughout the country who reside in public housing, or live in subsidized housing units, or hold Section 8 vouchers.

Rather than asking affordable housing developers to reduce their exorbitant salaries, the poor are being asked to give more of what little they have, or face eviction from subsidized housing.

As an example: Project-based Section 8 tenants typically pay 30 percent of their monthly income toward rent, with rental assistance making up the difference between what the tenants can afford and the approved rent. But even tenants with very little or no income are required to pay something. Currently, if 30 percent of a tenant's income is less than $50, he or she can be charged a minimum rent of up to $50 a month.

Under the draft of the new law, the cap on the minimum rent would be lifted. The new minimum rent would be set at least $69.45, and would be annually indexed to inflation.

If the caps are removed there will be no limits to rent increases. "The current HUD secretary, or the next one could go beyond," said Linda Couch of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. With the cap removed, "there is no limit."

Any and all tenants that cannot pay the new rent increases being demanded of them face eviction.

Meanwhile, covetous executives in the so-called affordable housing industry are allowed to continue grabbing more funds for their excessive salaries.

All tenants living in affordable housing projects are urged to unite and protest. They are urged to demand in writing that executives and employees in the organizations that own and manage the buildings they reside in *must* roll back their salaries and wage compensation to less than $80,000 per year!

Struggling for Survival in Low-Income Housing

by Jack Bragen

As a writer and as someone with some affluent relatives and friends, people may assume that I would never have to deal with low-income housing situations; and in my presence, they may feel at ease to criticize people who live in such housing.

In a writing group, a woman bemoaned her fear that low-income units would be built near where she lived. In the same spirit of meanness, she was insulting towards the work of writers in the group.

After living in several very difficult housing situations, my wife and I finally found an apartment five years ago where we don't face harassment and a high-crime environment. The landlord even installed a new air conditioning unit so I could get through the hot summer months.

In the most recent bad place where my wife and I lived, a couple blocks away from the "drug area" of downtown Martinez, I was forced to stand my ground against people who seemed extremely threatening. We had next-door neighbors who held incredibly loud and rowdy parties every night. I witnessed that neighbor, along with another man, beating up a third man.

A random partygoer knocked on my door at four in the morning to try and get a cigarette. I didn't give in despite his gangster-like look and manner. I said that he should go to a gas station. I called the police on these tenants and I complained to the landlord. They were evicted.

At the same building, we had other neighbors who weren't much better. A man was drinking hard liquor on the porch. The son had recently been to juvenile hall. He and another kid in the building used a cactus for target practice with their guns; the noise was maddening.

I don't know if it is worse to deal with the snobbery of the rich, or the obnoxious and threatening escapades that can happen in low-income properties. When a disabled person is living on SSI and SSDI, it can be very difficult to get into a good housing situation in which a person is neither threatened nor harassed.

A good credit rating has become a matter of survival. At one time, it may not have been a big deal to have some bad debt on one's record. Now it can make the difference in your ability to rent in a good area.

When forced to live in a bad area, your life may be in the hands of violent criminals who prey on impoverished renters. I will never forget the feeling of fear I had when dealing with people who I believed might pull out a weapon and shoot me if I said the wrong thing. Or the fear that I could get shot merely for being in the wrong place.

Safe, clean, accessible, affordable housing ought to be given to persons with psychiatric disabilities, across the board. Instead, we are left to struggle with the hardships of surviving in housing in which few people, if given a choice, would dwell. This dilemma forces many disabled people to remain institutionalized, which can be a dismal way of living.

National Day of Action for the Right to Exist

by Paul Boden, Wesern Regional Advocacy Project

"They want us out of our community!"

"We're always told to move on, but to where? There are no places for us to be."

— Survey Respondents

Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP) and USA-Canada Alliance of Inhabitants (USACAI) are calling on our members and allies throughout the United States and Canada to join us on April 1 for a national day of action for the right to exist — a day to protest the ongoing criminalization of poor and homeless people in our communities.

We are building a movement to reclaim our communities for all members — not just those who set the rents. In order to build this movement and assert our human rights, we must make clear the myriad of ways in which our community members are treated as though they are less than human. We must "connect the dots."

INVESTIGATING THE POLICIES THAT HAVE MADE MORE PEOPLE SUFFER

Over the past 30 years, neoliberal policymakers have substituted private gain for public good. They have abandoned economic and social policies that supported housing, education, healthcare, labor, and immigration programs. WRAP and USACAI are at work identifying and tracking such policy, in order to publicize their spread and their effects. This is not a matter of theoretical analysis: this is an investigation of the policies and tools by which more and more people have been made to suffer.

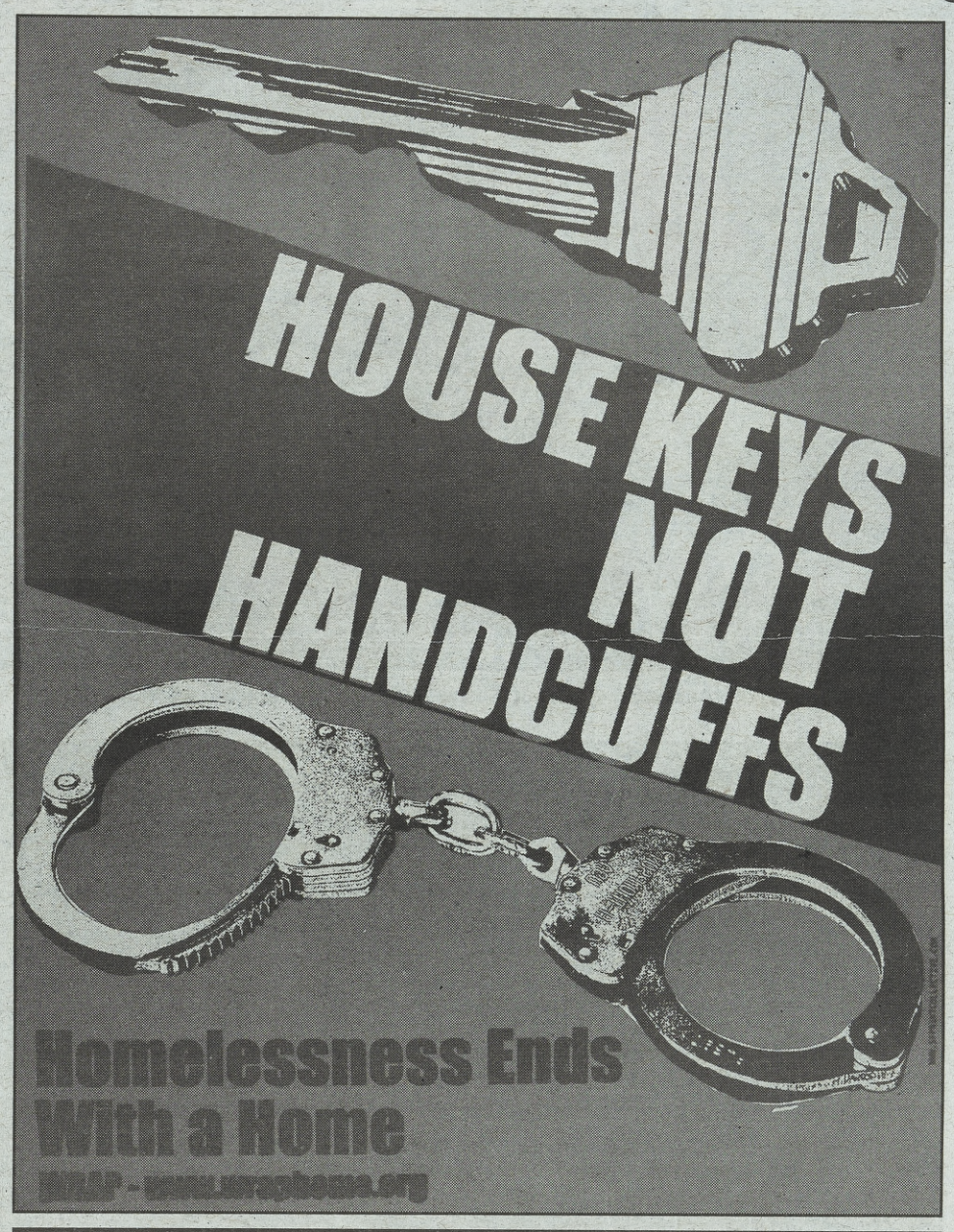
Three decades ago, the deregulation of financial industries came simultaneously with the withdrawal of government support for affordable housing. Just since 1995, the United States has lost over 290,588 existing units of public housing and 360,000 Section 8 units, with another 7,107 approved for demolition/disposition since March of 2011. At the same time, 2.5 million foreclosures have taken place since 2007, an additional 6.9 million foreclosures have been initiated, and a projected 5.7 million borrowers are at risk.

In those same 15 years, more than 830,000 new jail and prison cells have been built, draconian immigration laws and eligibility screening criteria have been implemented in housing, healthcare, education and jobs programs, and America's three largest residential mental health facilities are now all county jails — Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York.

NEW WAVE OF CRIMINALIZATION

1982 marked the beginning of homelessness as a "crime wave" that would consume the efforts of U.S. police forces over the next three decades. Crime statistics show that across the country, millions of homeless people were sitting, lying down, hanging out, and — perhaps worst of all — sleeping. To take one city as an example, by the end of 2011, these new "crimes" comprised roughly one third of all prosecuted offenses in San Francisco.

We all suffer from governments that waste resources and refuse to develop real solutions to social problems, but the people whose survival is criminalized suffer the most.



The sit/lie law that Seattle passed in 1993 is nearly verbatim the same sit/lie law that San Francisco passed in 2010. The sit/lie law that San Francisco passed to use against homeless people is the same law that San Francisco police now use to harass Occupy protesters.

SURVIVAL-RELATED 'CRIMES'

Over the past year, WRAP has led a survey effort with its West Coast members and allies in Portland, Berkeley, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver, Houston and Worcester, MA, documenting homeless people's experiences with the criminal justice system for survival-related "crimes." USACAI has helped WRAP to take this effort broader by reaching out to their members and surveying homeless people in cities throughout the United States on these issues.

WRAP is now releasing preliminary results from discussions with over 668 people. Of those surveyed, 78 percent of respondents reported being harassed, cited or arrested by police officers for sleeping outside. Also, 75 percent reported being harassed by police for sitting or lying down, and 76 percent were criminalized for loitering or simply "hanging out." These were far and away the top crimes for which homeless people were charged.

A sad corresponding fact is that only 25 percent of respondents believed that they knew of safe, legal places to sleep. In California, the public lodging law makes sleeping outside always illegal for homeless people. The law, by its nature, makes a large class of poor people inescapably criminal.

It can feel easy to scoff at these crimes. Most of the relevant laws, nationwide, are summary offenses ("infractions" in California; "violations" in some other states), which means that they can't directly result in any jail or prison time. However, 57 percent of respondents reported bench warrants issued for their arrest as a result of these citations: that is, if they couldn't afford to pay the fines that these tickets carried, or if they were unable to make court dates, then they became subject to arrest.

USING THE WORD "WE"

Core to our success in this survey research was the active, engaged outreach of volunteers from nearly a dozen different organizations throughout the United States. Using an organizing method that WRAP members have developed and polished on the streets of cities on the West Coast, they were able to procure good information, and, far more importantly, begin important conversations within our communities about the real nature of criminalization and its impacts.

By seeking out homeless people in the places where they really spend time and engaging our communities on their own terms, we were able to develop true, communal knowledge, founded in collective experience, and we are able to use the term "we" to talk about our communities in ways that isolated "experts" never can. We are organizing in a more honestly democratic way.

'LET US WORK TOGETHER'

This is not about caring for or even advocating for "those people." This is about all of us. As Aboriginal leader Lilla Watson said, "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

The rise of repression in the United States and Canada is a war against all of us. We need all of us to act in this struggle for dignity, fairness and human rights. The people who pay for and profit from the criminalization of homeless people are the same people who benefit from our nations' refusal to meet basic human needs. They are using these laws to do what invading armies do: they attack us at our most vulnerable flanks — the communities of poor and homeless people who have been subjected to shame and blame for decades.

The sit/lie law that Seattle passed in 1993 is nearly verbatim the same sit/lie law that San Francisco passed in 2010. The sit/lie law that San Francisco passed to use against homeless people is the same law that San Francisco police now use to harass Occupy protesters.

If you are not homeless, if you are not the target now, then understand that you are next. Isolated and fragmented, we lose this fight. But we are no longer isolated.

We can only win this struggle if we use our collective strengths, organizing, outreach, research, education, art and direct actions. We are continuing to expand our network of organizations and cities and we will ultimately bring down the whole oppressive system of policing poverty and treating poor people as "broken windows" to be discarded and replaced.

WRAP is calling for a national day of action on April 1st to raise awareness on this issue. We will publishing information on ways to get involved in the coming weeks. Stay tuned!

Street Spirit

Street Spirit is published by **American Friends Service Committee.** The vendor program is run by **J.C. Orton.**

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Bulldozing People's Park Is Not User Development

"Let A Thousand Parks Bloom." **The People's Park mural depicts ancestral spirits of Native Americans and activists who inspired the creation of the Park.** Lydia Gans photo

UC officials are trying to implement control and "security." It is up to us to decide if we want recreational areas to resemble prison yards or be living, inspiring, beautiful refuges.

by Terri Compost

The University of California's recent bulldozer "maintenance" in People's Park in Berkeley is problematic in several ways. First, it is a violation of trust and respect. The University snuck into People's Park in the early hours on December 28, and their bulldozers plowed through the west end of the Park, and destroyed the community garden — with no notice to the community and longtime Park volunteers.

The pergola, or trellis, in the west end of People's Park, which UC officials rather mysteriously decapitated, was designed and agreed upon during almost a year of meetings with University architects and the volunteers who built it. And the information that UC officials are providing for their recent attack is misleading, if not outright falsehood. I'll eat my hat if People's Park sports a native grass and poppy prairie. And how does destroying a trellis deal with rats? Please!

Secondly, the University of California has destroyed precious natural resources that were purchased, planted and tended by volunteers. The list of food-producing plants destroyed in the bulldozer assault include: plum trees, native manzanita, olive, grape vines, kiwi plants, maguay, nopales cactus, and a mature rose bush, as well as beautiful plants like pink amaryliss bulb flowers, pyrocantha and a palm-like plant donated to the Park by Mario and Rosalinda that was growing by the entrance to their property in the back of the Park. It will take years to replace the food and beauty those plants were producing.

Thirdly, UC officials are trying to erase history. The incursion is a test to see if the People will hold this place as the sacred ground we liberated from the folly of UC officials in 1969 and have held all these years. Bulldozing is not user development.

The pergola trellis, that was cut in half, was made out of the old-growth redwood that was recycled from the volleyball court fiasco of 1991. Volunteers worked with UC architects until UC officials were satisfied with the earthquake safety of the trellis. It beautified the park and held native grapes, jasmine and kiwi vines. It was a beautiful example of recycling — recreating and providing healing from the wound that the volleyball court made on People's Park and the community.

Also, the berms that were removed were actually piles of asphalt that were ripped up by people in 1979 when the University lied, then, about a free parking lot. And the Council Grove surrounded by the plum trees has long been the Park's best meeting place. These are literally testaments of our history that were destroyed.

The berms created a peaceful place between two busy streets. They were a feature that good landscape designers desire. The University is trying to implement control and "security." It is up to us to decide if we want recreational areas to resemble prison yards or be living, inspiring, beautiful refuges.

Well, now there is a void. I hope people will rise to the challenge and recreate with their friends and their own dreams. Viva People's Park.

People's Park was protected by many years of protests, and it has flowered due to years of volunteer gardening. Lydia Gans photo

These are literally testaments of our history that were destroyed. UC officials are trying to erase history. The incursion is a test to see if the People will hold this place as the sacred ground we liberated from the folly of UC officials in 1969 and have held all these years.

PEOPLE'S PARK

by Julia Vinograd

The wizards in old tales
used to bury their hearts in secret places.
And unless you dug up the heart and
destroyed it,
they were invulnerable and heartless.
Part of my heart is buried in People's Park.
Not all of it, not even the largest part.
Other places, people and I'm no wizard
so I keep some of it myself.
Part of my heart is buried in People's Park.
Leave it alone.
It's the part that will never be reasonable,
never grow up and know better
and do worse.
It's young;
breathing is sweet to it, and wild and scary.
It remembers meeting soldiers' bayonets
with daffodils.
It remembers tear gas drifting
over swing sets.
It will always be young.
Leave it alone.
I go to the park sometimes to talk to it.
Not often. Time passes
and it doesn't always recognize me.
But it tells me there are many hearts
buried with it.
All young, all proud of what they made
and fought for. Do not disturb them.
Do not build on them.
Do not explain that times have changed.
Do not tell them it's for their own good.
They've heard that before.
They will not believe you.
There are many hearts buried in
People's Park and a part of my own as well.
Oh, leave them alone.

The Flowering of the Colorful

by Mary Rudge

It was tie-dye on the peace march,
tie-dye in the park
tie-dye "in the sky with diamonds"
singing through the dark
when the Beatles were imagining
and Deadheads came to town
and in Berkeley Wavy Gravy
was more king than clown —
was mayor more than
ice cream flavor — every pantry full
of sharing in abundance
and no need for choosing "dull"

Love-Ins, Be-Ins, fields and meadows
it was a new beginning
of a garden on the sidewalks
in a world where peace was winning,
leaving money and technology
and other things-gone-wrong
for all colors celebrated
and poetry, dance and song
let free-wheeling color-wheel
the drab majority still mystify
with Tree-of-Life true values,
and tie-dye multiply.

For an era flowered here
telling of youth compelled to try
peace, love;
the psyche's history holds it,
not to fade or to deny.
Together, colors permanent,
no time change can defy,
with tie-dye still a rainbow sign
of dreams that never die.

UC Berkeley Officials Desecrate People's Park

UC officials sent bulldozers to People's Park to destroy trees, flowers and the garden on December 28. Carol Denney photo

by Arthur Fonseca

By some accounts, it was as early as 4 a.m. on Dec. 28 that UC Berkeley Police and contracted landscape workers hired by UCB started setting up orange plastic fencing around the west end of People's Park. By 2 p.m., the damage had been done: Bulldozers, backhoes and bobcats, chainsaws and chippers.

The berms of pavement lifted by activists in 1979 and stacked next to both the Dwight and Haste sidewalks as a reminder of our history were leveled. Dozens of mature plants tended by community gardeners were turned to mulch. Long-existing pathways were indiscriminately blocked off with no consideration for handicapped access.

Perhaps worst of all was the indiscriminate vandalism of a volunteer-built structure that existed along the fence line on the west side of the Park, starting near the northwest corner and running southwards about 72 feet. This structure, called a "pergola," was built by volunteers in 1999 and 2000 out of the old-growth redwood lumber that had been recycled from the University's ill-fated volleyball courts.

The University of California had required an incredibly involved and drawn-out approval process for the pergola structure that took almost a year to accomplish. Both the City of Berkeley Planning Department and University of California Landscape Architect Jim Horner signed off on the project. The structure was inspected after it was completed and passed, also by Jim Horner.

That the University sent workers in the middle of the night and chain-sawed off the trellis portion of the pergola, killing both a mature grape vine and a mature kiwi vine in the process, was dreadful.

That they ran the old-growth redwood that had been transformed by volunteers from a volleyball court to a pergola through a wood chipper before anything could be done about it was shocking.

That they carried out their vandalism without once notifying any of the many volunteers who had worked on that project about their plans, although they themselves had required the volunteer activists to go by the letter of the book, was a rape.

There is some possibility of redress, perhaps a civil case against the University of California, as the project was documented thoroughly from beginning to end.

Park activists are working on a benefit to be held at the Art House Gallery And Cultural Center at 2905 Shattuck Avenue in Berkeley on Saturday, Feb. 4, 2012, from 6-10 p.m. It will feature performances by Phoenix, Antioquia, Andrea Prichett and Friends, and Food Not Bombs! For information about the benefit, contact: (510) 830-7787.

REMEMBERING PEOPLE'S PARK

by Julia Vinograd

I remember trading a poetry book for
a potted plant from a street vendor
and bringing it to the park
only to be told it was a house plant,
it wouldn't grow outside,
didn't I know anything? No, I didn't.
I think it was a poinsettia. I put it
down and pretended it wasn't mine.
Planting surged around me like waves.
Bare backs heaving small trees
into big holes
to shouted orders and many hands
grabbing at once. Spades and picks,
flying earth and shaken petals.
I didn't know anything
but I didn't go away.
Then tear gas and time. Wings of war.
The cyclone fence, storms in the street
and James Rector dead.
Each spring the flowers are as young
as they were that morning
when I didn't know anything
but I didn't go away.

A Modest Proposal for Building Community in People's Park

by Arthur Fonseca

Ever since the University of California created a conflict with the Berkeley community by building a volleyball court in People's Park in 1991, the war for People's Park has primarily been a war of perceptions. The University of California has in place a standard policy of obfuscation and obstruction that hinders community participation, as well as occasionally attempting to criminalize the efforts of community volunteers.

This is not just a conflict over perceptions, but ultimately over our values, the quality of life in our community, and ultimately, how we function together to resist the degradation of our history by the corporate military-industrial complex.

Unfortunately, Berkeley has experienced a wave of development over the last decade that has put unprecedented pressure on People's Park, so much now that the UC Regents are in the process of spending somewhere between 70 and 200 million dollars building a dormitory for out-of state students right across the street from People's Park.

All of the money for these capital improvement projects is, literally, money that they don't have, and they are making this community, as well as their students and workers, pay for their financial ineptitude.

It is a popular perception that People's Park is somehow a detriment to Telegraph and the Southside neighborhood. It is my belief that if the residents and business owners actively take pride in People's Park (i.e., contribute to the improvement and better functioning of the Park.), the benefits to commerce and the general quality of life in the Telegraph area would be immediately apparent.

After all of these years, is it not glaringly apparent that the City of Berkeley treats People's Park like a pariah, and UC would just as soon get out the tear gas and the truncheons?

After all of these years, is it not glaringly apparent that the the City of Berkeley treat People's Park like a pariah, and the University would just as soon get out the tear gas and the truncheons? How else shall we make People's Park a functional place other than with our own individual efforts in combination?

One of the most positive attributes of People's Park is that it is an awesome place to have free concerts, and, as such, could be a tremendous draw for business on Telegraph. Volunteer activists have organized free concerts in the Park in the past, and their efforts made it apparent to everyone involved that there was a great deal of potential in these events for the Telegraph community.

The potential is there for a really fun event that involves a broad cross-section of the community, motivates the students, and shows off the Park and Telegraph to their best advantage.

It seems that if we the community can get together on projects such as free concerts, or perhaps holiday celebrations for the community in People's Park, a lot of other good things can fall into place for People's Park, and therefore our community.

The Universe's Ancient Light

by Arthur Fonseca

gazing through the field of view
projected from the jewel within your heart
your organism exudes emotion
in liquid form of imperceptible density
shifting focus, color and intensity.

from the central flower grows
whorls and flows
changing form and perspective
moving patterns in fluctuation
feelings become memories in gradation
floating remnants of past incarnations

streaming with the strength of feeling
weightless... soothing... invisible... healing
the colors of remembered dreams
charged with the force of spirit,
an astral song, yet we barely hear it

in this pool of felt memory we are floating
surrounded by our solid light coating
where the mundane obscures the sublime
we are bound to matter, blind to dreamtime

so...
with that charged aura
as you channel power from the flora
from the flexibility of your field
using nature as your shield
with compassion for all your relations
creating love with inspiration

Become a conduit for the starry night
for it is the universe's ancient light
that shines through your will.

Homelessness Means Being Cast Out of Civilization

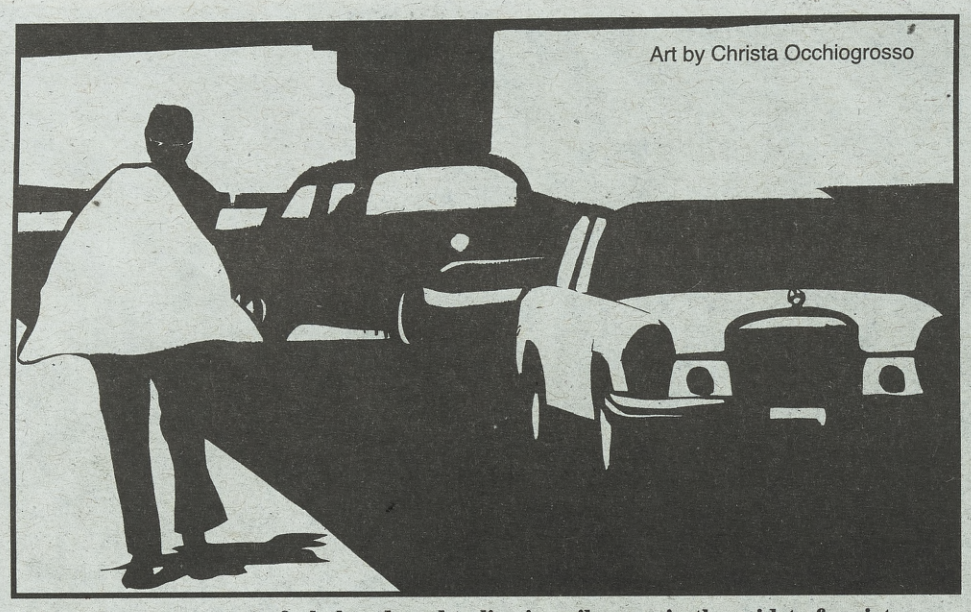
by Jack Bragen

People don't seem to fully realize how dependent we are on technology and modern infrastructure. Being prepared for the world has come to mean simply having your cell phone, car keys and debit card handy. When the infrastructure fails even momentarily, in the event of a power blackout or an earthquake, we realize how difficult it is to survive.

Think of how unsettling it is when a flat tire on the freeway strands us at the side of the road. Or, think of a train, the Amtrak Coast Starlight, that makes its way from the Bay Area farther north, through miles of wilderness, up to Oregon. Imagine being forced to get out of the train, and being stranded in the wilderness, with no people around for countless miles, and the ground covered with a thick layer of snow. The goal would be to get "back to civilization" — meaning, back to being taken care of by society's technology and infrastructure.

Imagine what it would be like to be suddenly stripped of our cars, our houses (with indoor plumbing, heating, air conditioning, refrigerator and television), our cell-phones, our computers and our money that buys practically anything we need. If we were stripped of all these amenities, our survival would be imperiled.

When we are without the comforts of technology and subject to the elements, life becomes so much harder. Suddenly, the sun and the wind and the cold have the power to make us suffer. When we are hungry, we no longer have a big refrigerator. If we need to go anywhere, the only available transportation will be our feet. Even simple errands become difficult and time-consuming because it takes so long to walk across town. Homeless people know this very well from personal experience.



A homeless person may feel abandoned to live in exile even in the midst of society.

If we become homeless, we find that, suddenly, the police aren't here to protect and serve. Instead, they have become the strong arm of the law that tells us where we can't be, the same arm that might be raised to beat us. It is the same arm that could punish us by taking us to jail for panhandling, trespassing, and disorderly conduct. And jail is not the place where we want to be.

Homelessness is equivalent to life outside the infrastructure. It means we don't have technology to take care of our needs. It is a hard existence. No one in their right mind chooses the distress and hardships of homelessness over the much easier and more comfortable existence that the "inside" of society offers.

However, once you are homeless, it is a very hard circumstance to get reversed. Few business owners will hire a homeless man or woman to work in their company. Finding such a benefactor would be harder than finding a needle in a haystack. Yet, it is unrealistic to expect someone to "get a job," without first taking other steps on the narrow road back to society.

You would first need to get some type of transitional housing and establish a mailing address. You would need to have someone take phone messages for you and deliver them to you in a timely manner. You would need a place to shower, wash your clothes and shave. You would also need access to a computer and an e-mail account, since very few jobs now don't include computer literacy.

Homeless people are those who have fallen through the cracks of society, for any number of reasons. They may not be able to work full-time and, may have been turned down for disability benefits. In the case of being unsteadily employed, it leads to having a poor credit rating as well as a poor rental record. A good credit record and a big pile of cash are two things needed to get into an apartment.

If you have no choice but to rent in a destitute area, then you could be subject to the physical dangers that come with a drug-infested neighborhood. In such neighborhoods, you could be harassed or attacked by criminals. This makes life more difficult if you are trying to fight your way back from homelessness.

Fear and danger are no strangers to homeless or poorly housed persons. Someone who has survived hard situations in the past, but who has come out of this experience, may suffer from post-traumatic stress for years afterward. When we see a person who appears homeless or down and out, we should not scoff at them. "There but for fortune go you or I."

Serial Killer Stalks Homeless People

from page 1

Chris Juarez described Berry to KABC Eyewitness News: "He was just like the kindest person ever. A homeless man that never asked for anything, never begged. He stuck to his own thing. He was perfectly happy."

Ocampo was finally captured by a policeman after being chased on foot by witnesses and bystanders from the fast-food restaurant where he allegedly stabbed Berry. Berry was Ocampo's most recent homeless murder victim. Ocampo is charged with four counts of first-degree murder, for the four homeless men he is accused of killing over the holiday season.

Ocampo first was charged with murdering James McGillivray, age 53, on Dec. 20, 2011, at a mall in Placentia. Next, on Dec. 28, Lloyd Middaugh, 42, was found stabbed to death near the Santa Ana River Trail in Anaheim. Then, only two days after this murder, Paulus Smit, 57, was found stabbed to death near the Yorba Linda Public Library on Dec. 30.

The recent spate of killings terrorized homeless people in Orange County. As the unsolved, highly publicized murders continued for weeks, homeless persons wondered if they were going to be the next to die at the hands of the serial killer.

According to authorities, every one of Ocampo's victims were stabbed a shocking number of times. His first victim, James McGillivray, was stabbed more than 40 times. Lloyd Middaugh was stabbed more than 50 times, Paulus Smit was stabbed more than 60 times.

The police realized they were tracking a serial killer who was terrorizing the homeless population. It was reported that three of the people killed by Ocampo were attacked and stabbed to death while they were sleeping alone on the streets.

John Berry was stabbed to death on Jan. 13, and Anaheim Police Chief John Welter admitted that only days before the homeless man was brutally murdered, he filed a report with the police stating that he believed he was being stalked by the serial killer. Apparently he was right, yet the authorities failed to protect Berry, and keep him safe from the serial killer.

Orange County District Attorney Tony Rackauckas confirmed that even while police sought the killer, Ocampo had twice driven through vehicle checkpoints set up in an attempt to gain information about the killer from the public. Ocampo was never apprehended at these checkpoints.

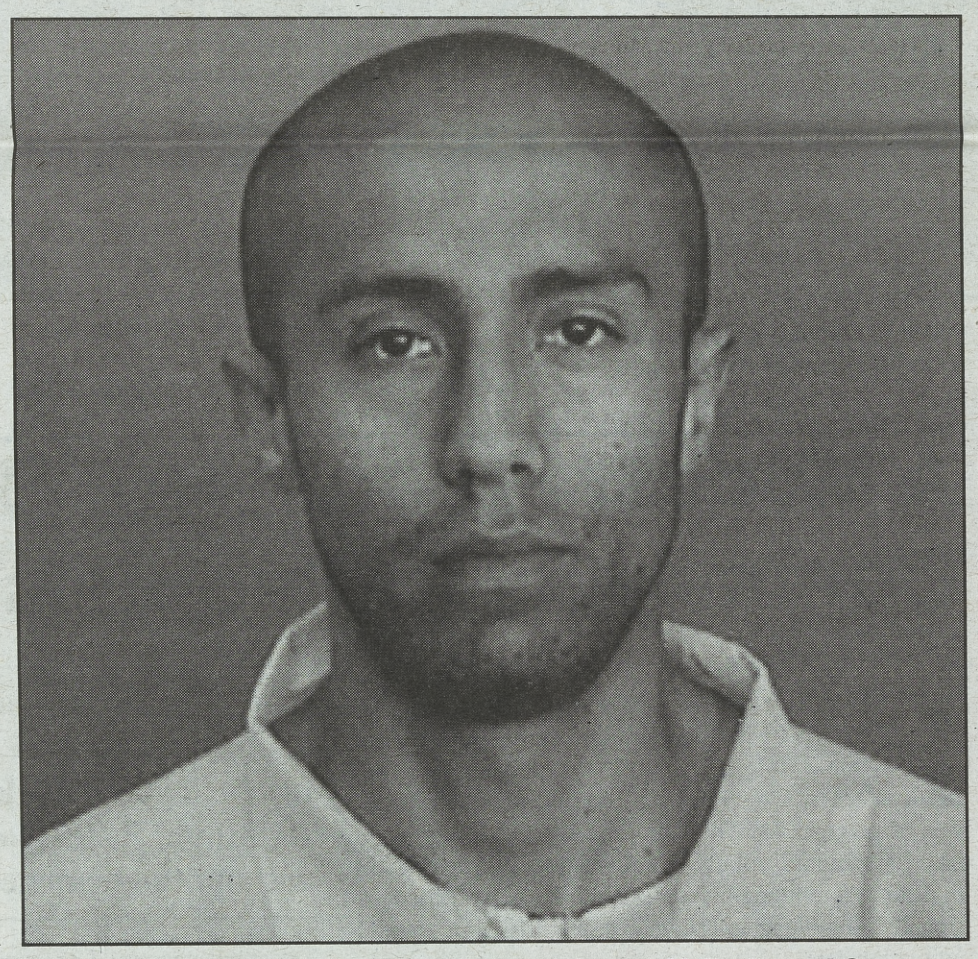
To further compound the tragedy, District Attorney Rackauckas stated that Ocampo chose Berry to be his fourth victim because Berry had appeared in a news article about the serial slayings, warning homeless men to be careful.

Evidently, the Association of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs placed such a low value on the lives of the homeless, that they only offered the public a mere $5,000 reward for information leading to the capture and arrest of the serial killer. This was barely the same reward amount that people are currently offering for lost pets in the same affluent region.

The miniscule reward of $5,000 offered by the Association of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs for the capture and arrest of a serial killer in Orange County, one of the wealthiest counties in the nation, reveals how the authorities place little to no value on the lives and deaths of the homeless men that were stalked, stabbed and brutally murdered by the ex-Marine, Itzcoatl Ocampo.

District Attorney Rackauckas filed charges against Ocampo on Jan. 17, including four counts of special circumstances murder, with additional charges for multiple murders, and for murders committed while lying in wait, and with the use of a deadly weapon.

The district attorney commended the citizens whose actions led to the apprehension and filing of the charges against Ocampo, the same citizens that now may be eligible for the $5,000 reward, for risking their lives in the capture of the alleged serial killer. Ocampo was captured by a policeman after being chased on foot by witnesses and bystanders from the parking lot of Carl's Jr. after stabbing Berry.



Orange County authorities released this photo of accused killer Itzcoatl Ocampo.

It paints a very grim picture of the status of homeless people in America to realize how very little their lives are valued by the authorities. Consider the paltry $5,000 reward offered for the arrest of a serial killer who brutally murdered four human beings — in affluent Orange County where the pet dogs or cats of wealthy people often are worth the same amount in reward money.

For what it's worth, on Jan. 7, 2012, it was reported that a pet owner in Simi Valley (an hour and a half drive from Orange County) was offering a $5,000 reward for a lost Chihuahua. In nearby Glendale (34 miles from Anaheim), a car owner offered a $5,000 reward for a stolen 1959 Chevy Impala. On Nov. 10, 2011, elsewhere in California, it was reported that a reward of $5,000 was offered for a lost Doberman puppy.

On Jan. 17, 2011, in Seattle, a $5,000 reward was offered on Craigslist for a stolen male pit bull. On Dec. 6, 2011, in Houston, a $5,000 reward was offered for a chocolate labrador retriever. On Aug. 8, 2011, a woman in British Columbia offered a $5,000 reward for her lost cat.

Considering that the authorities of Orange County believe it is a fair deal to offer the same amount of reward money for the conviction of a serial killer of homeless men, as some people are being rewarded for finding a lost dog, or stolen car, it is evident that homeless persons have virtually no value to the authorities.

Lynda Carson may be reached at tenantsrule@yahoo.com

The Berkeley Food and Housing Project Faces New Challenges

from page 1

beds are full. We often put out cots — and then they get full."

The overloading of the shelter capacity is occurring at the men's shelter in the Veteran's Building and also at the women's shelter. Many homeless people are forced to sleep in their cars or on the street.

The overriding need of the clients coming to the BFHP is getting into affordable housing. Some people have lost their jobs or have reduced incomes. Most of the clients are not working. They are people on fixed incomes, seniors, and disabled or medically fragile people who are living on decreasing SSI benefits or entitlement programs for which funding is being cut.

At the same time as lifeline benefits are being cut, rents in the Bay Area are going up. As a result, a large proportion of BFHP's resources are now devoted to finding affordable housing.

"We're really focused now on helping people find housing." Terrie Light said. "So we have housing specialists that actually go talk to landlords, drive people to apartments, help them fill out applications, and advocate with landlords for deals or work for part of their rent."

Connie Green, shelter supervisor at the men's overnight shelter, described the difficulties of finding housing. Rents in single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels — which used to be the least expensive housing option for people with extremely low incomes — are all going up. Also, the area's growing poverty rates means that an increasing number of very poor people are competing for the limited housing stock, resulting in a severe shortage of affordable housing in the East Bay.

Green said, "We had a landlord who had over 500 units between August and September. He has 6 units now—the cheapest being a studio at $1150 a month."

Landlords hesitate to rent to people with fixed incomes. Green said that this landlord told her that he would never rent to anybody with a subsidized income. "He said, 'Why rent to somebody with low income? If something comes up and there's an emergency, they're going to buy food before they pay the rent.'"

It has become clear that a stay of 30 nights in a shelter is not enough. The worsening shortage of affordable housing means it now takes longer just to find housing. Clients now need more help in accessing other resources, so the BFHP now has more staff to provide client services.

The focus of the program has changed. Green said, "This was typically a 30-day shelter and it's changed into an interim housing model." A person can stay longer if he or she is seriously looking for housing and works with a case manager.

A BFHP housing clinic is available at Trinity Methodist Church all day long. If a person is jobless, they are referred to an employment program at Rubicon, St. Vincent de Paul, or another agency. Green said, "If you've successfully done that and brought in a resume and a cover letter and a name of a job coach who we can collaborate with, you can stay longer."

The women's center has case workers to help women become independent and the women's shelter also allows residents to stay longer if needed.

NEW PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

Last spring, the Berkeley Food and Housing Project started a special program for military veterans. Terrie Light tells of applying to the Veteran's Administration for funding, noting that statistics show that California has 20 percent of the nation's homeless veterans, many of them living in the Bay Area.

Patrick Lewis, Willie Robinson and Raymond Jackson *(from left to right)* are homeless veterans who live in the Berkeley Food and Housing Project's new veterans' program. Many military veterans return home from overseas after serving their country, only to end up living on the streets because housing and jobs are in scarce supply. Lydia Gans photo

Given the history of the anti-war movement in Berkeley, Light said, "I have a feeling we have more vets that aren't identifying as vets because this is Berkeley. So we need to do things to let vets know we're welcoming them."

The new veteran's program is called Welcome Home Berkeley. According to Light, Berkeley City Councilmember Kriss Worthington said at the program's dedication that this was "healing for the city to be able to reach out to vets."

The program is housed in the Veteran's Building, but it is separate from the men's shelter located in the same building. The new veteran's program is in an enclosed section, almost like a small apartment, with a kitchen, living room and bunks for 12 vets. They have access there all day.

"This is where they live," Light said. "Because they're all former military, they're a military unit and it's interesting how they work together, and cooperate and support each other in their search for independence. So most of the men there are looking for work, one has gone back to college at UC and the initial 12 that we started with in May already have had six move out into housing."

I dropped in one afternoon and found three of the vets there. All had lost their housing because they were not able to keep up their rent and they are trying to find work. All three are applying for their veteran's benefits, a process which is taking an inordinately long time.

Raymond Jackson served in the Navy during the Vietnam era. When he got out of the service, he went back to his job at the University of California, but he is no longer working. "I'm 64 years old," he said, "and things happen. I'm working on getting a pension from the Navy. It takes a while, like a year to process."

Another veteran, Willie Robinson, said he is applying for his benefits "for a lot of injuries." He was denied three months ago and now is in the appeal process.

Patrick Lewis entered the military in 1980 and served for 16 years, primarily in Saudi Arabia. He was a diesel mechanic in the military, and is now looking for work. He is applying to the VA for disability benefits for post-traumatic stress disorder.

Lewis said, "The occupation of Saudi Arabia lasted for so long a lot of people were never recognized for the disabilities they came back to the states with."

He launches into a description of the complicated process of applying for benefits at the Federal Building in Oakland. "You start on the 11th floor where you initially pick a veteran's personnel that's going to represent you," Lewis said. "Then you go to the 12th floor where they pull all your records to find out if you have a case that should be pursued, then you go to the third floor where they take a look to see if you have a legitimate claim. Then you're on the waiting scale and they may have to send back east, to find out your records to verify you were in conflict."

By this time, I was wondering how he could be so calm about the arduous process. "I produced all my military records — that I was fired on while in the war situation," he said. "I'm still waiting." It's been almost a year and, like the other homeless veterans, he's worried that his allotted time in the shelter will run out and he could again be homeless.

Light said, "The increase of services requires more staffing" because helping people overcome homelessness no longer just involves checking them into the shelter and giving them bedding. The BFHP now helps people find housing, refers them to employment services, and helps figure out what to do with their children.

"We give our staff oodles of training," said Light. "We have a whole component of training for staff — from new employee orientation, to case management training, to housing case management."

The BFHP now employs more than 60 people, half of them full-time staff, and the rest part-time and on-call.

"And we have had to do fundraising to do that," Light adds. "A lot (comes) from the City of Berkeley. We're the biggest grantee of the City of Berkeley. We get quite a bit of federal money, a modest amount of county money and absolutely no state money. About 30 percent comes from private donations and foundations."

Volunteer or Donate to BFHP

To donate, send checks to Berkeley Food and Housing Project, 2362 Bancroft Way, Berkeley CA 94704, c/o Terrie Light. Donate by credit card by going to the BFHP website at http://bfhp.org/donate or call the Development Department at (510) 649-4965, ext. 585. To volunteer, contact Volunteer Coordinator Danielle Knutson at dknutson@bfhp.org or call (510) 649-4965, ext. 506.

How Sad He Must Be

by George Wynn

When the flashbacks come
he goes off by himself
to Muir Woods
to see images he alone
must watch for endless
moments of torture and
when he comes home
his friends who have
not been to the war
laugh and talk but
he does not

For All the Danny Boys

by Claire J. Baker

I imagined I was a baritone
singing "Danny Boy" on a small
rosy stage in Shangri-La.
Lambs minced down from green
pastures, stood listening,
their little bells stilled
like a held breath.

They seemed to sense that Danny,
their much-beloved shepherd,
was off to war — that whatever
the season in Shangri-La
Danny was not coming back
until every war had ended.

Master Sergeant on the Street

by George Wynn

"One third of the nation is ill-housed, ill-clothed, and ill-fed."
— Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Master Sergeant on the street
tells me I hear
myself breathing
how much longer
is it really what I want?

I barely survive
it angers me
things should have
been better at 65

It's a damn shame
no one's in charge of
making things better

Domestic Workers and Their Children March for Rights

by David Bacon

SACRAMENTO — Early Tuesday morning, on Jan. 24, 2012, busses of domestic workers and their children began arriving at the huge grassy mall in front of California's state capitol building in Sacramento. Dozens of Mexican, Filipina and African American moms, kids in tow, poured out onto the steps leading into the legislature's chamber. When the crowd grew to several hundred, they took up their placards, pushed their strollers out in front, and began marching around the building.

Some of the kids had clearly done things like this before. One five-year-old raised her fist in the air as the crowd chanted, calling on members of the State Assembly and Senate to pass the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights.

Another girl, who looked about three, knew the chant by heart: "We are the children, mighty, mighty children, fighting for justice and our future." She didn't miss a beat, and as one of the organizers held the bullhorn up to her mouth she did a little militant dance to accompany it.

With balloons and even a couple of clowns, it all seemed very festive. But the happy atmosphere didn't hide a more unpleasant truth. Many of the moms there probably see less of their own children than the youngsters they care for. And in the case of those caring for the aged, sick or disabled, the conditions of that work can seem like something a century ago.

Domestic workers often don't get a break to eat, even when working many more hours than the eight-hour workday. Others cook for the families they work for, but can't use the same implements to cook for themselves.

If they have to sleep in the homes of clients, they often have to get up during the night several times to perform basic services for them, like taking them to the bathroom, or giving them medicine. And the night is considered a rest period, for which they sometimes don't get paid.

One Filipina caregiver from the East Bay said that she sleeps in the same bed as her client. "What I'd like would be a bed where I could sleep by myself," she said.

Even at the ages of five or six, the kids marching with their moms are old enough to understand a little of those bitter truths. When one young girl, who looked about kindergarten age, held up a sign saying "trabajo digno," or "decent work," she knew enough to explain that her mother "doesn't get enough money, and she works too hard."

Women and their children rallied at the Capitol in Sacramento to seek justice for domestic workers. Photos by David Bacon

Last year, the California Assembly passed AB 889, authored by Assembly members Tom Ammiano and V. Manuel Perez, that would give domestic workers some state-recognized rights in their efforts to curb abusive conditions.

It would provide meal and rest breaks, overtime and reporting pay as enjoyed by other workers, and expand domestic workers' access to workers compensation. It also would guarantee eight hours of sleep for those who work around the clock, and allow them to use kitchen facilities.

The bill would affect the 200,000 people who work in California domestic service, who are almost entirely women, and immigrants or people of color. While domestic workers face the same excuses for substandard conditions faced by other women, namely that they're only working to supplement the income of men, most of them are either the sole source of income for their families, or are bringing home pay that their families can't live without.

One woman explained that she was still working many more than 40 hours a week, and was in her 70s.

The Domestic Workers Bill of Rights is modeled on one that was enacted in New York State in 2010. It is supported by dozens of statewide worker and community advocates, including the California Labor Federation and many other unions, Filipino Advocates for Justice, the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, Mujeres Unidas y Activas, the Women's Collective of the San Francisco Day Labor Program, a number of churches and synagogues, and Hand in Hand, the Domestic Workers Employers Association. Its main opponent is the business association for agencies that provide domestic workers to clients.

At the end of the last session of the legislature, the bill was in the appropriations committee of the State Senate. The marchers hoped to pry the bill loose, get it passed through the Senate, and convince Governor Jerry Brown to sign it.

One of several legislators who spoke to the crowd, Watsonville Assembly member Bill Monning, explained in Spanish, "This bill is just, and we're going to make sure it becomes law and that domestic workers finally get the same basic rights as other workers."

Finding an Escape from the Streets of Broken Dreams

Short story by George Wynn

Some people lie down on the street at midnight and are dead at dawn. 64-year-old Mitch taught creative writing at a prison in the Great Northwest and had a weakness for the bottle — which intensified when he suffered the double whammy of a pink slip and divorce from a red-haired beauty half his age.

After months of depression and passivity, he arrived in the Golden State and wound up sleeping on the cold concrete of Golden Gate Avenue in San Francisco.

Mitch and the stocky fellow next to him stretched out their aching limbs. Mitch extended his hand and smiled, "Name's Mitch." The stocky man gave a firm handshake, "Joey."

"Let's have some cheese and French bread," said Mitch, while taking the food out of his big pack. He broke off a big piece of bread and sliced a hunk of cheese with his pocketknife and handed it to Joey, and cut a small piece of cheese for himself. Between bites, Mitch proceeded to tell Joey the story of his life.

"You've been around some bad dudes," said Joey.

"They weren't all bad," said Mitch. "Lot of smart ones in prison."

"Guess so," said Joey, sounding unconvinced. "Anyway, I was a prizefighter, lost my left eye in the ring. Detached retina did me in. It's been a struggle ever since."

"I bet it has," said Mitch. "How's the cheese?"

"Good, real good," said Joey. Mitch talked to him in a language he could understand. They hit it off right away, perhaps because both men were honest, salt-of-the-earth types. The next day, Mitch gathered together some fishing gear and they went fishing down at the wharf. At Muni Pier, they cast for fish in silence with mindful intent, as if they were casting to quiet their troubled minds.

Mitch gave Joey a dog-eared copy of Hermann Hesse's spiritual novel, *Siddharta*. A few days later Joey reported, "Mitch, this is the best little book I ever read. I'm ready for another book."

Mitch slapped Joey on the back, "Let's go to the Main." At the Main Library, he introduced Joey to Hemingway's stories, which also engrossed Joey.

Around Mitch, Joey had a sparkle in his right eye. Something had been missing from his life before. When Joey dwelled on the aura of language, his body — grown cold during evenings spent on Tenderloin pavements — seemed to warm itself. Often, Mitch would drift off, preferring to drink in private, not bother anyone, not be a nuisance. One evening, Joey turned a corner and saw a man of bulk rummaging through Mitch's pants and stripping him of his watch. Joey snatched the watch out of the man's hands.

"What the hell?" exclaimed the big man.

"This watch belongs to a good friend of mine," Joey shot back. "Walk away."

The big man stared at Joey but took a step back after seeing the wild look in Joey's eye, and the tension in the veins of his bull neck, vibrating with latent aggression, and the balled-up fists which still carried dynamite in either hand.

"Wasn't nothing but a cheap watch," said the big man and walked off.

Joey woke Mitch up, and said, "I got paid today for some casual labor work I did last week. We'll get a cheap hotel for the night."

"I owe you, Joey," replied Mitch.

"No you don't. You taught me to grab on to life. I owe you!"

One morning, Joey woke to a terrible sense of big loss. Mitch didn't wake up. A combination of liver damage from booze and Tenderloin evening chills did him in. Now Joey was left alone in this gentrified city with the dispossessed fighting over scraps. Once again Joey was in darkness. Mitch was the light. His last words to Joey were, "You have to escape from the streets of broken dreams."

"I'll try."

"Not good enough. Trying is dying. Promise me."

"I promise," said Joey. It was those words that led Joey to the Zen center where he meditated to quiet his mind and get focused, like Siddhartha Buddha of his favorite book. After a month of steady work, Joey decided it was time to leave.

He would visit his 90-year-old grandmother in Kansas City whose ramshackle house was in dire need of repair. For several months, he dedicated himself to the world of wiring and roofing and painting and all kinds of patch-up work.

Suddenly one morning, just like Mitch, his grandmother didn't wake up. To Joey's amazement, she left the house to him. A neighbor told him, "She really appreciated your help and the other relatives were doing fine and you needed a break big time."

Joey got a job in a fast food diner to pay off the mortgage. One evening, he saw a contest for inspirational people in the *Kansas City Star*. Joey sent in his submission about Mitch and to his disbelief he won. "Imagine that, Mitch, I got published in the same newspaper where Hemingway got his start," he said out loud — as if Mitch was still around.